

In the Claims:

Claims 1, 3, 6, 8, 10, and 11 have been amended; claims 2, 4, 5, 7, 10, and 13-15 have been canceled without prejudice. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Twice amended) A tray for holding a plurality of surgical fasteners, the tray comprising a base having a plurality of wells therein, at least two of the surgical fasteners being disposed within respective ones of the plurality of wells; and

a film over the base and the plurality of wells, a weakness in the film over the plurality of wells whereby to more easily allow an instrument to penetrate the film and enter one of the wells;

wherein each of the wells and the surgical fasteners within each well are maintained in a sterile environment regardless if any of the other wells have been opened.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently amended) A tray according to claim [2] 1 wherein the weakness comprises scoring of the film.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently amended) A tray according to claim 1 and further comprising ingress means on the film over the plurality of wells to allow an instrument to penetrate the film and enter one of the wells.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Twice amended) A method of holding surgical fasteners comprising the steps of:

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providing a tray having a base with a plurality of wells therein;
providing one of the surgical fasteners in one of the wells;
covering the wells with a film;
modifying the film over the wells to ease the ability of an instrument to penetrate the wells;
sterilizing the wells and surgical fasteners disposed therein; and
penetrating the film to access one of the surgical fasteners in one of the wells while maintaining the sterile environment in the remaining wells.

9. (Original) A method according to claim 8 and further comprising the steps of penetrating the film with an instrument and removing the fastener from the well with the instrument.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Currently amended) A method according to claim [10] 8 wherein the step of modifying the film over the well to ease the ability of the instrument to penetrate the well comprises providing a weakness in the film.

12. (Original) A method according to claim 11 wherein the weakness comprises scoring the film.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Original) A method according to claim 9 wherein the instrument is an applier for applying the surgical fastener.